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Letter to Catherine Mayberry regarding SEAALL survey, November 20, 1959

Betty Taylor

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November 20, 1959

Miss Catherine Mayberry
Institute of Government
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

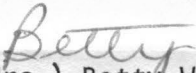
Dear Cathy,

I want you to know that I had a wonderful time at Chapel Hill and thank you so much for your part in making the meeting a big success.

Enclosed is a copy of the report I drafted for you. I hope it is what you had in mind to receive from committee members. If you wanted something more specific, please let me know and I will attempt to bring this one more in line.

In addition please let me know when I can be of further assistance to you on this committee or in the organization. You really did sound like the Secretary needed a Secretary.

Most sincerely yours,


(Mrs.) Betty W. Taylor
Assistant Librarian

Committee on Preliminary Plans for Project to Survey
Law Library Resources in the Southeast and
To Train Custodians of These Collections

Report from Betty Taylor, University of Florida Law Library
November 18, 1959

The Southeastern Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries has agreed to undertake a project to train custodians of law library collections in the region in an attempt to reach the individuals totally untrained in law and library service. These persons need the most assistance and are the least likely ones to know where, how, or why to approach SEALL members for help. It is the intent of the committee to aim its arrow of assistance toward this group probably composed primarily of Clerks of Court and Judges' secretaries. The Committee itself met and at once agreed to eliminate in-service training aspect of the program for present members of the organization with the view of recommending a workshop or problems seminar on an advanced level in connection with the annual meetings.

Before training individuals it is necessary to establish rapport with them and in order to do this effectively we would have to be thoroughly familiar with their resources, their problems, their personal qualifications for the positions they hold and the like. The trained librarian could overwhelm the uninitiated so it would be very important to refrain from presenting an over-zealous program at first meeting.

The committee feels that this project is a five-pronged program consisting of:

1. The Contact
2. The Survey
3. The Manual
4. The Training Institute
5. The Follow-Up

1. The Contact

The first contact with these persons is the most important in making this project successful. As we learned from the experiences of the Institute of Government at the University of North Carolina, the contact can "make or break" us on the project. Tact and diplomacy will be essential elements of this phase. This contact could consist of a friendly visit, or a warm letter in preparation for a visit in instances where the distance might necessitate the consolidation of the contact and survey. This meeting should be so planned that the "Contactee" is immediately on the offensive so to speak, explaining what he is doing, how he does it, and how he can help our association. If the person is not at ease at the beginning, then it will be difficult to proceed further or ever get him to a training institute.

2. The Survey

The survey should be so well organized ahead of time that the surveyor will know exactly what to look for and what information is needed. It will be important that all surveys made by different individuals within the geographical unit produce similar information. It would be well for the inexperienced surveyors to have a questionnaire or form available to check off so that they do not omit vital information at the initial survey.

Such a survey should include the number of volumes in the collection, where the emphasis lies (local state reports only, etc.), the number of miscellaneous treatises, any special collections, et. al. Conceivably the size of the collection would be a good factor to use in determining the amount of time devoted or that should be devoted to the book collection and the caliber of the person administering it.

Perhaps if the individual responds, he could inform the surveyor of problems he has with filing pocket parts, buying replacement volumes, circulation procedures, and interlibrary loans policies, to name a few. This will be important in the survey for it will be impossible to interest these persons in training if they are unaware of their problems or if the Institute program is not geared to their problems, as quite possibly their problems may seem so simple to the trained persons that they could be entirely overlooked.

Most people who lack adequate education are reluctant to discuss the topic so this area might be developed within the training program once the ice is broken and each realizes he is participating in a homogeneous group. But there could be real hazards here if a lawyer in a firm who has responsibility for a library participated in a training institute with a pleasant lady of some years secretarial experience but who is not particularly interested in the library.

3. The Manual

After the surveys are completed, the surveyors will have a fairly complete picture of the size of libraries, types of individuals controlling them, and the problem in connection with their operation. At this point the surveyors could make suggestions as to the subject content of the training program. My guess is that the problems will be categorized in the usual areas of library administration: acquisitions, cataloging, circulation, reference, and interlibrary loans but on a very elementary level.

From the suggestions outlined by the surveyors, the drafters of the manual can set to work writing out the information that will be most helpful to the trainees. The manual should be more comprehensive than necessary

for the largest-sized library surveyed so as to be helpful for those individuals as well as alert the others for problems which will arise with them as their libraries increase in size.

The manual would serve a three-fold purpose: 1. it could be used as a teaching manual at the institute, 2. as a practical manual to distribute to the trainees to keep permanently and 3. to serve as a basis for an advanced manual for SEAALL members.

4. The Training Institute

The training institute would be the culmination of the field and paper work but only the commencement of the real service that can be rendered by our members. However, we cannot decide among ourselves to organize an institute and expect an attendance. Much good publicity and enthusiasm will have to be generated in order to guarantee an audience. In Florida there are two active associations which could be contacted to assist with such a program. The Florida Library Association probably would carry publicity but to my knowledge I am the only law library member. Perhaps the Florida Bar Association would assist in that they could encourage judges and law firms to participate by sending their employees. But other than these two associations it would be impossible to reach the persons for whom we are aiming through organized channels.

The training programs should be divided into districts as it is highly improbable that local employees (i.e. in Florida) would be subsidized on a trip to North Carolina. Different states lend themselves to different divisions so the members of each state could decide upon the number of and geographical area for the training units.

Initially the lecturing could be done by our own members who

probably already have encountered any problems which might arise in a smaller library, and who would have some suggestions to make as possible solutions.

Also if most of our members participate in the preliminary work, each would have a good background of personal experiences in meeting with and understanding these people and their problems. Presumably the value of this personal touch between the trainees and lecturers would surmount any benefit the trainees might receive from lecturers with superb qualifications and experience.

If all of this program "comes to pass," we could justifiably pat our respective backs for accomplishing a magnificent job well done.

5. The Follow-Up

But even if this whole program were a huge success, it would be most unfortunate if it were dropped right there. We should encourage these persons to participate in SEAALL but even more important that we should establish ourselves as a convenient repository for books, information, advice and service to these people who by this time should be aware of their problems and be ready to ask for assistance.